

HOME (/)  
ABOUT  
JOURNAL (/ABOUT)  
MASTHEAD (/NEW-PAGE)  
PROSPECTIVE MEMBERS (/PROSPECTIVE-MEMBERS)  
SUBSCRIBE (/SUBSCRIBE)  
STAFF RESOURCES (/STAFF-RESOURCES)  
PUBLICATIONS  
PUBLICATION ARCHIVE (/PUBLICATION-ARCHIVE)  
VOLUME 1 (2009) (/VOLUME-1-2008-2009)  
VOLUME 2 (2010) (/VOLUME-2-2009-2010)  
VOLUME 3 (2011) (/VOLUME-3-2010-2011)  
VOLUME 4 (2012) (/VOLUME-4-2011-2012)  
VOLUME 5 (2013) (/VOLUME-5-2012-2013)  
VOLUME 6 (2014) (/VOLUME-6-2013-2014)  
VOLUME 7 (2015) (/VOLUME-7-2014-2015)  
VOLUME 8 (2016) (/VOLUME-8-2015-2016)  
VOLUME 9 (2017) (/VOLUME-9-2016-2017)  
VOLUME 10 (2018) (/VOLUME-10-2018)  
SYMPOSIUM  
INFORMATION (/SYMPOSIUM)  
BLOG  
FULL BLOG (/FULL-BLOG)  
BLOG ARCHIVE (/BLOG-ARCHIVE-1)  
  
SUBMISSIONS (/SUBMISSIONS)

October 7, 2011 (/full-blog/2011/10/nay-i-say-negative-implications-of.html)

## Nay I Say: The Negative Implications of Horse Cloning in Competitive Horse Racing (/full-blog/2011/10/nay-i- say-negative-implications-of.html)



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By: Sam Jones, Staff Member

While most of the world stands in awe of recent developments in cloning technology, entrepreneurs and investors are catching hold of the financial promise that such a field holds. The process by which an unfertilized egg is implanted in another's female body has opened the floodgates for new medical and genetic research as well as marketable capitalization.[1]

The equine industry and international breeding organizations are only a few of the many groups to mold this new option to their commercial desires and endeavors. Particularly, those in champion racehorse breeding circles saw nothing but promise in the possibility of preserving the

excelled genetic materials from past racing giants like Secretariat, Jon Henry, Desert Orchid, or even the savior of modern horse racing, the Great Man o' War, and funneling it into a new super-class of modern track stars. By cloning a champion racehorse, owners are investing in a business that could yield detrimental results, but also unfathomable returns. Still, even as scientific developments are speeding out of the gates, equine federations are quickly drawing the reins to slow the rush of the commercial investors who are eager to line the pockets of nuclear and genetic marketing firms.

No stranger to Kentucky, the International Equine Federation has firmly stated its commitment to the preservation of fairness and sportsmanship for both participants of its sport, rider and horse, on an international level.[2] It remains open and supportive of advancements and developments related to the interbreeding of champion horse lines and even cross-breeding through artificial insemination (AI). However, it remains opposed to the idea of permitting cloned horses to compete in any sanctioned international event. It states: "The competitive equestrian couple of horse and rider are both acknowledged as athletes by the FEI. The cloning of either with a view to competing at international level would be unacceptable to the FEI." [3] Some American equine organizations, such as the American Quarter Horse Association and the Jockey Club, which controls the registration of thoroughbred racehorses, do not allow cloning either.[4] This position is has merit and should be supported by Kentucky legislature.

Racehorse breeders are a strange breed of their own, favoring the scientific selection of excellent bloodlines and parentage over the lackluster competitive methodology of pure training and race experience.[5] They are, however, missing the essence of competition by trying to better their odds through science and cents. Although there is no guarantee that a sire's superior racing heritage will be inherited by the newly created foal, the financial risk is well worth the investment. In 2006, the price of the first commercially cloned foal was roughly \$150,000[6], which is pocket change compared to the \$60-million sales tag on the Kentucky Derby winner Fusiachi Pegasus six years *before* the first cloning.[7] With such a high risk payout, investors select bloodlines very carefully and only interbreed with the best, most prestigious lineages possible. Unfortunately, this leads to genetic overlapping and inbreeding, which spurs a whole range of developments issues for horses, both prenatally and on into adolescent maturation.[8]

Additionally, this genetic commercialism of racehorses" forces out breeders, trainers, and owners who are not financially able to compete with those who can afford to resurrect past racehorse legends, let alone those who already breed champion horse lines with other accomplished lineages. To some, using science and genetic modification takes the "sport" out of the sport. It becomes nothing more than a forced exploitation of animals, bundled with all the harmful health risks that accompany cloning.

Kentucky's horse racing industry rakes in \$4 billion in state funds annually, but it is failing because it has been forced to cope with losses of wagers, investors migrating towards other tracks and breeding incentives, and even shortages of horse technicians and veterinarians.[9] By permitting the inclusion of genetically modified horses that are projected to have the physical superiority literally "in their blood," the field of competition will be sharply one-sided and ruled by those with the deepest pockets, which would create additional challenges for the already wavering equine industry in Kentucky. Permitting genetically cloned horses to compete in high-stakes races eliminates the competitive preparation and training invested in so many steeds and prevents those outside the upper class from participating in one of the most prized aspects of Kentucky's identity.

[1] Lexa W. Lee, *Pros and Cons of Horse Cloning*, eHow: Biology Sciences: Stem Cells, [http://www.ehow.com/info\\_8536886\\_pros-cons-horse-cloning.html](http://www.ehow.com/info_8536886_pros-cons-horse-cloning.html) ([http://www.ehow.com/info\\_8536886\\_pros-cons-horse-cloning.html](http://www.ehow.com/info_8536886_pros-cons-horse-cloning.html)) (updated June 3, 2011).

[2] *Who We Are & What We Stand For*, International Equine Federation, <http://www.fei.org/about-us/profile> (<http://www.fei.org/about-us/profile>) (last visited Sept. 17, 2001).

[3] Fran Cleland, *Cloning Controversy*, Weekly Times Now (Sept. 19, 2011)[http://www.weeklytimesnow.com.au/article/2011/09/19/380881\\_horses.html](http://www.weeklytimesnow.com.au/article/2011/09/19/380881_horses.html) ([http://www.weeklytimesnow.com.au/article/2011/09/19/380881\\_horses.html](http://www.weeklytimesnow.com.au/article/2011/09/19/380881_horses.html)). See Tom Reed, *Pink Flamingos or ink Horses- The Cloning Crux*, Eurodressage (Sept. 9, 2011),<http://www.eurodressage.com/equestrian/2011/09/09/tom-reed-pink-flamingos-or-pink-horses-cloning-crux> (<http://www.eurodressage.com/equestrian/2011/09/09/tom-reed-pink-flamingos-or-pink-horses-cloning-crux>) (last visited Sept. 19, 2011).

[4] Lee, *supra* note 1.

[5] *Is Anyone Against Cloning Racehorses?*, Curiosity.com, <http://curiosity.discovery.com/question/is-anyone-against-cloning-racehorses> (<http://curiosity.discovery.com/question/is-anyone-against-cloning-racehorses>) (last visited Sept. 18, 2011).

([http://www.blogger.com/post-edit.g?blogID=8202935745006855383&postID=3041631496997479654#\\_edn1](http://www.blogger.com/post-edit.g?blogID=8202935745006855383&postID=3041631496997479654#_edn1))[6] Maryann Mott, *Champion Horse Cloned by Texas Breeder*, National Geographic News (Apr. 4, 2006), [http://news.nationalgeographic.com/news/2006/04/0404\\_060404\\_horse\\_clone.html](http://news.nationalgeographic.com/news/2006/04/0404_060404_horse_clone.html) ([http://news.nationalgeographic.com/news/2006/04/0404\\_060404\\_horse\\_clone.html](http://news.nationalgeographic.com/news/2006/04/0404_060404_horse_clone.html)) (last visited Sept. 19, 2011).

[7] Mott, *supra* note 6.

[8] Lee, *supra* note 1.

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